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THE EXHIBITIONS.

IX.—PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY OF THE FINE ARTS.

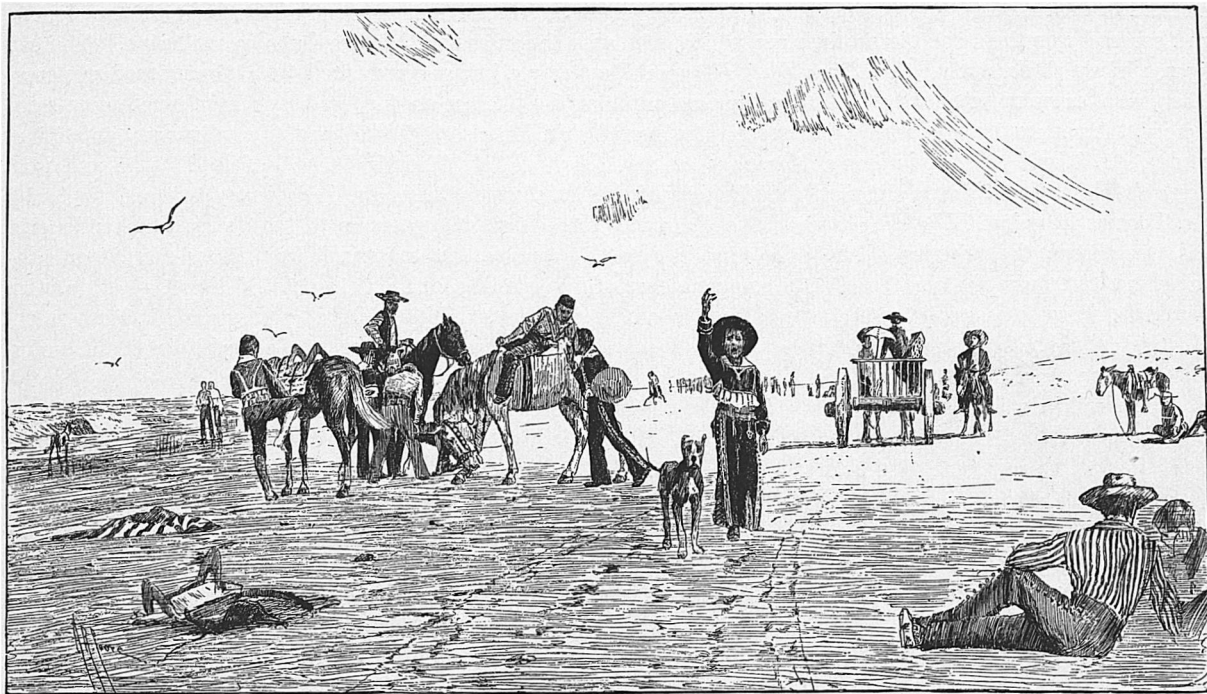
FIFTY-SECOND ANNUAL EXHIBITION.

(OPENED APRIL 4. CLOSED MAY 29.)



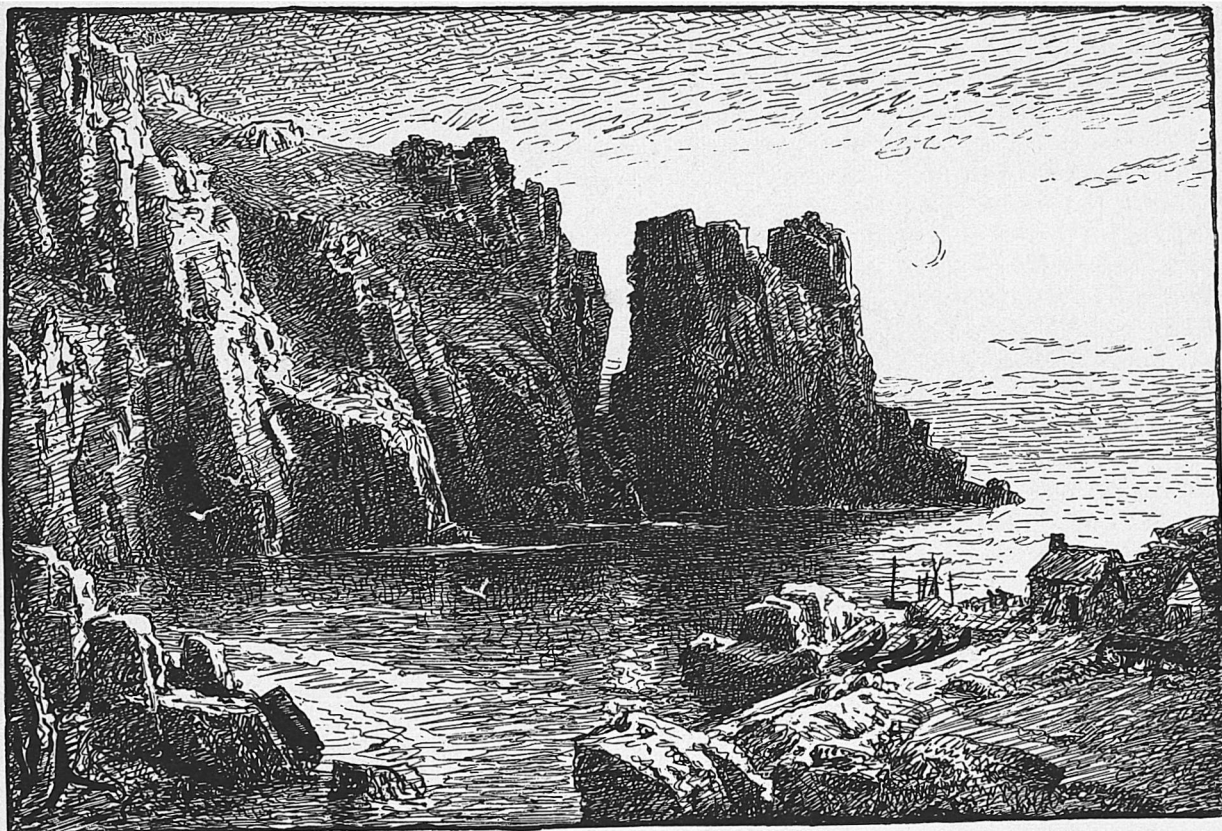
COMPARED with the Exhibition which was held in the halls of the Pennsylvania Academy last fall, the present Spring Exhibition may certainly be called insignificant as a whole. But if we approach it with no more exalted expectation than that which would be awakened by any other American picture show of the usual kind, we shall find, not only that it holds its own tolerably well, but that it even offers an interest which is not always to be looked for on similar occasions. Our continually repeated and constantly multiplying exhibitions must necessarily be monotonous, and this without any fault of the artists. So long as we compel our painters to paint pictures on speculation, and to send them about the country at their own risk, we cannot in conscience ask them to try new experiments from year to year, for the purpose of giving freshness to our exhibitions. An artist happens to hit upon a certain class of subjects or effects which appeal to his own sensibilities and at the same time please the public, and it is natural enough that he should go on working the mine as long as it will pay. Indeed, he does a favor to the public by so doing, for there are always many customers to be supplied, and as he cannot possibly turn out enough stock in the space of—say a year or so, to satisfy the demands of his patrons, he must necessarily go on for several years. To the impassioned art lover, who is very apt to be at the same time unpractical, unreasonable, and—worst of all—impecunious, this repetition very naturally becomes wearisome, and the unpleasant effect grows upon him, when, wandering from town to town in quest of exhibitions, he meets with the same things everywhere. To him those few exceptional artists are a delight who are incessantly working at the solution of new problems, or who endeavor to pry into the secrets of Nature by hitherto untried passages, and to discover new charms in her ever-varying features. It is a rare treat for him also to come upon some young artist who seems destined to open new fields in the future, should the promises he holds out be redeemed.

For these reasons the interest in the present Exhibition centres upon the works of Mr. Frank L. Kirkpatrick, a young Philadelphian artist who has lately returned from Munich. His *In the Museum* (generally, but improperly—owing to a concatenation of circumstances which cannot here be detailed—called *The Greek Rhyton in the Museum of Seville*) represents a rich interior, with ladies and gentlemen in seventeenth-century costumes, who are examining an immense *rhyton*, or drinking-horn, sculptured in white marble, and standing upon a pedestal of the same material. The picture excites admiration, not only by its technical skill, but also by its scheme of color, which is somewhat novel, being based upon the contrast of delicate greens with deep rich reds. The correctness of its drawing has been challenged, and there is some truth in this, so far as the perspective is concerned. But the figures, which are simply accessories, are so cleverly put in, and the whole work breathes such elegance, and evidences such a command of resources, that one cannot do otherwise than admire. In these days of technical legerdemain the fear is quite justified that an excess of skill may lead an artist into danger, if the skill is not disciplined by a constant reference to nature. If Mr. Kirkpatrick can escape this danger, and there is no reason why he should not, we may expect great things from him in future,—a hope which his other contributions, seen by themselves, would not, perhaps, have inspired. A second picture of much promise (to which the accompanying sketch does even less justice than such renderings usually do) is *A Mexican Gala Day, Preparations for the Race*, by Mr. H. R. Poore, of Philadelphia, who has recently shown also a couple of clever etchings. The composition is, indeed, somewhat scattered, consisting of separate groups rather than a well-constructed whole, and the color seems cold for the strong effect of sunlight; but there is good workmanship in the picture, and a very excellent rendering of aerial perspective. It is pleasant, too, to see the skill of a young American artist applied to an American subject. Our own country, as well as our sister republic of Mexico,—not to speak of South America,—is full of subjects for those who have eyes to see them.—Among the artists who are ever seeking, Mr. Eakins occupies a high rank. His *Biglen Brothers Practising*,—two professional oarsmen in their boat at early morning,—although painted nine years ago (the picture is dated 1872), is quite fresh in interest. Like so many of this artist's pictures, it impresses one as a scientific statement of form and light, rather than as an embodiment of movement and color. The two men are admirably drawn, but they seem to have been



A MEXICAN GALA DAY.—PREPARATIONS FOR THE RACE.

BY H. R. POORE.—FROM A SKETCH BY THE ARTIST.



CLIFFS OF ST. LEVANT, CORNWALL.

BY W. T. RICHARDS.—FROM A SKETCH BY THE ARTIST.

arrested in their motion. The principal charm of the picture lies in the management of the light on the figures, and especially on the stone pier in the river, which, with very simple means, is carried almost to illusion. The two figures in the little water-color, *Base-Ball Players Practising*, being represented in a moment of suspense, when, with every muscle ready for action, they are watching the pitcher, are for that very reason much more satisfactory. Among other noteworthy pictures may be named Mr. Moss's *A Bad Hand* (a cardinal and an abbé at cards), Mr. Wordsworth Thompson's *Morning on the Towpath*, Mr. Thom's Düsseldorfish *Winter*, and Miss Corson's *Boy with Censer*, although the drawing of the hand which holds the censer may be open to doubt. Mr. Thomas Leaming (*The Horizon of the Poor* and *The Ragpicker*) seems to have socialistic tendencies, and has chosen the miseries of the poor for his theme,—a noble text to preach from, no doubt, if only the preaching were more skilful. To effect a complete cure of the yearning for the flesh-pots of Egypt,—or, in other words, the desire for state aid to art,—it will only need the frequent exhibition of such pictures as Mr. Rothermel's *Charge of the Pennsylvania Reserves across Plum Run*, of which the State of Pennsylvania is the unfortunate owner.

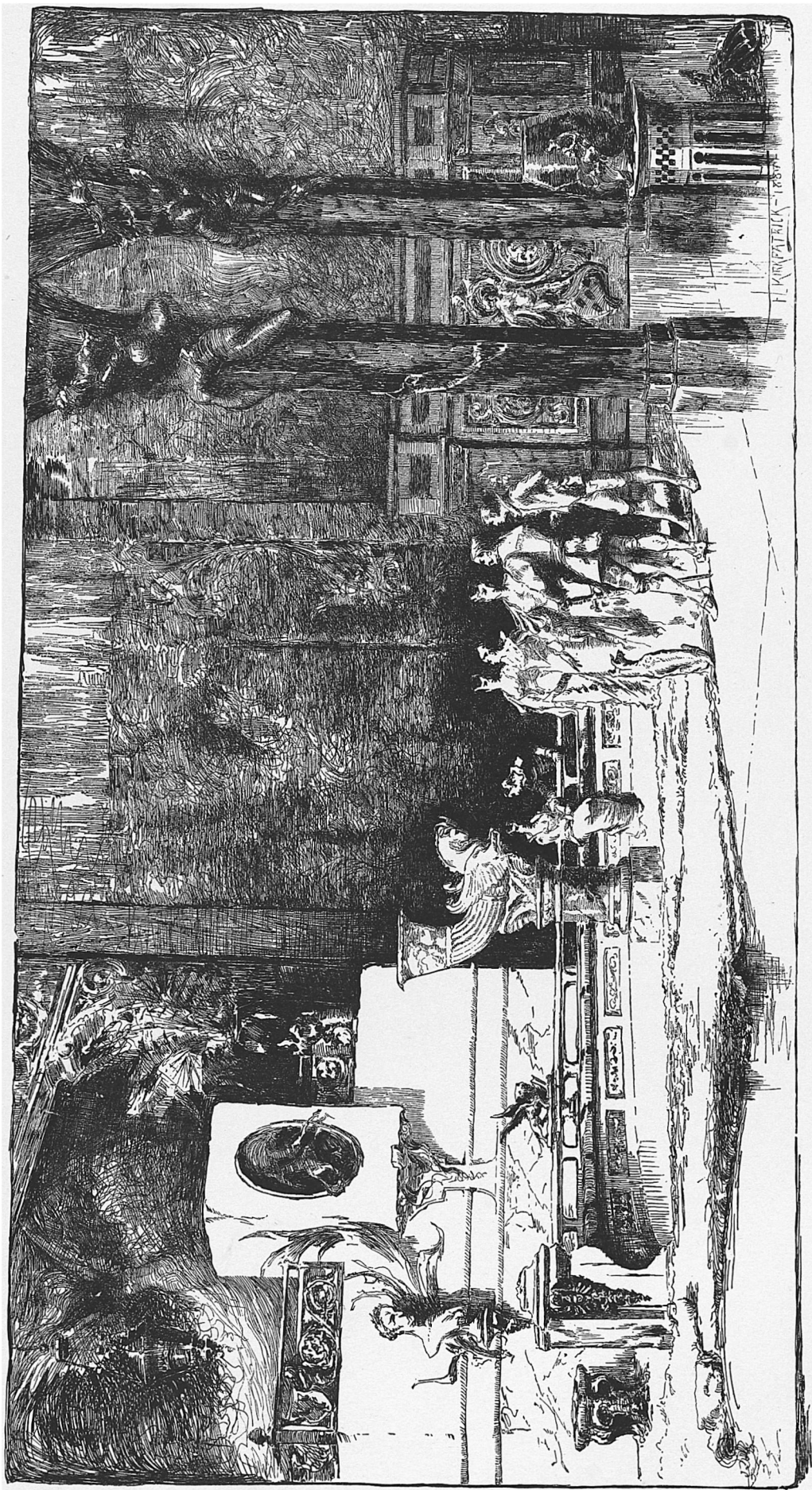
There will be small dissent, probably, from the choice of the committee who awarded the Mary Smith Prize to Miss Emily Sartain for her portrait, entitled *Marie*. Broad in treatment, and full of feeling, although somewhat *outré*, in the management of the light, this head has what so many similar works lack,—the expression of inner life, in addition to the verisimilitude of outward form. It is cause for wonder that so few professional portrait-painters seem to appreciate the aid they might receive from skilfully managed effects of light in rendering their works impressive and pictorial. As a study of character Mr. Carl Marr's *Portrait of a Gentleman*, which seems to betray the influence of Leibl, stands perhaps at the head of all the works of its class in the Exhibition, although its repose is somewhat disturbed by the curious treatment of the background. Miss S. H. Macdowell's *Portrait of a Gentleman*, not quite harmonious in color, commends itself, nevertheless, by its pose and lighting. A curious similarity in treatment is noticeable in two *Study Heads*, both of them of old Scotchmen, one of which the catalogue attributes to Miss Lucy D. Holme, the other to Miss Rebekah T. Furness. One might almost be inclined to think that the catalogue must be mistaken. An *Ideal Head*, an attractive blonde in white, by Mr. F. W. Freer, has all the realistic qualities of a good portrait.

Mr. W. T. Richards's *Cliffs of St. Levant, Cornwall*, which has been given the place of honor, is an admirable specimen of the older school of landscape art,—solidly painted and carefully studied, with nothing of modern impressionism about it, and yet fresh and vigorous and airy. Similar in subject and in scheme of color to the *King Arthur's Castle* shown by Mr. Richards at the last Exhibition of the American Water Color Society, it is nevertheless much more successful. Quite the opposite is Mr. Shearer's treatment, who is at his best in an effective water-color, *Evening in Holland*, which might pass for a somewhat sober Currier. Mr. Hamilton Hamilton, who besides several water-colors exhibits an oil painting, *The Ranch*, seems to be wrestling manfully with the problems of light and color. Unwilling to make any compromise for the sake of harmony, he paints in a high key, and yet this landscape can hardly be said to be attractive in color. But in this he only shows his devotion to nature, for nature also is least attractive in color when seen under a very glaring light. Mr. R. Bruce-Crane is represented by one of his well-known spring landscapes, which have now become staple goods upon the market, and a number of other names might also be mentioned—if it would benefit anybody—whose possessors are represented by more or less characteristic examples. The presence of a large collection of Mr. Tilton's well-known elaborations is an accident rather than anything else, and these works can hardly be looked upon as a legitimate part of the Exhibition of the Academy.

Mr. Parrish, in the marines, or rather shore views, which he contributes, adheres to the evening effects which he has so successfully cultivated, and Mr. Charles A. Platt, who, like Mr. Parrish, has quite rapidly developed a facility for etching, seems to follow him in this respect also. The antipodes in method are represented by the water-color marines of Mr. E. R. Harrington (*Coasters on Long Island Sound*), who finishes to the last degree, and Mr. George Hitchcock (*At Anchor, Scheveningen*), who displays a delightful breadth and freedom. It must be conceded, however, that both are good in their way, in spite of the preference for breadth which compels one to lean towards Mr. Hitchcock's method.

There is, of course, the usual complement of fruit and flower pieces, among them a very excellent study of grapes, nuts, etc., *Fresh Gathered*, by Mr. Widgery-Griswold, together with good specimens in the same department by Miss V. Granbery, Mr. E. C. Leavitt, and Mr. W. M. Brown. Nor is there a lack of the sentimental atrocities which still find a way into most of our exhibitions; but a discussion of them would be quite uncalled for, as those who perpetrate them and those who take pleasure in them are alike beyond cure, while they are harmless to people with healthy eyes.

The Black-and-White part of the Exhibition does not offer much that is good and new at the same time, many of the designs, woodcuts, etc. having already attained a wide popularity in the pages of the monthlies, and of this REVIEW. As excellent examples of bold and knowing pencil-drawing, the sketches by Mr. C. A. Vanderhoof deserve especial mention.



IN THE MUSEUM.

PHOTOTYPIC FAC-SIMILE OF A PEN-AND-INK DRAWING BY FRANK L. KIRKPATRICK, FROM HIS OWN PAINTING.

THE ORIGINAL IN THE POSSESSION OF MR. FAIRMAN ROGERS, PHILADELPHIA.